**UEFA launches new #EqualGame adverts starring Hegerberg,**

**Messi, Pogba, Ronaldo & amateur players**

**Global icons on board to promote inclusion, diversity and accessibility**

Some of football’s biggest stars joined forces with amateur players from around Europe in the advertisements for #EqualGame, UEFA’s new RESPECT social responsibility campaign, which positively promotes inclusion, diversity and accessibility in football.

**Ada Hegerberg, Lionel Messi, Paul Pogba** and **Cristiano Ronaldo** feature together in two new videos, with an extended version premiering on Monday 11 September and a TV spot making its first appearance on 12 September for Matchday 1 of the UEFA Champions League matches.

The extended #EqualGame film is available to view now on the campaign’s dedicated website ([www.equalgame.com](http://www.equalgame.com)) and on UEFA’s social media platforms. It can also be downloaded here: <https://uefa.box.com/v/equalgame>. The TV-spot will be broadcast throughout the 2017/18 European club football season across all major UEFA competitions.

The new #EqualGame campaign films advocate **UEFA President Aleksander Čeferin**’s belief that European football’s governing body should be a social fair play organisation, which means a zero-tolerance stance on racism, sexism, homophobia or any form of discrimination:

“It is vitally important that UEFA makes football accessible for everyone and, through the power of sport, becomes a global leader to fight for social equality.

“The new #EqualGame initiative aims to help to bring the football community closer together and ensure that values such as inclusion, gender equality and the fight against discrimination continue to be at the forefront of UEFA’s vision and beliefs.”

**Paul Pogba, the Manchester United FC and France midfielder**, has been one of the most vocal supporters of #EqualGame and he explained he is delighted to have the opportunity to help people become aware of all the possibilities to enjoy football:

“I am really honoured because it’s something that I can and want to do – to show the world that we’re all equal and we just play football because we love it.

“I think UEFA’s #EqualGame campaign is something that will help football in the whole world – it will send a message to everyone that we are all the same on the pitch wherever you come from. As players and fans, we all share the same love for football on the pitch. I hope fans will get inspired and spread the message.”

**Cristiano Ronaldo, the Real Madrid CF and Portugal forward**, says he is supporting #EqualGame because of his belief that football can be a force for good:

“I am grateful for everything football has given to me and my family, and this is why I want to give back to society as often as I can. I see it as my responsibility, as a person and a footballer, to try to bring happiness to as many people as I can, on and off the pitch.

“I truly feel that football can be a force for good in people’s lives, no matter who they are, where they’re from or what their ability is. This is why I decided to support UEFA’s #EqualGame campaign, because it promotes that football is for everyone.”

**Lionel Messi, the FC Barcelona and Argentina forward**, believes football has the power to break down barriers and is giving his support to #EqualGame:

“During the course of my career, our beloved sport has taught me many things, but above all it has shown me that football really is a universal game that is accessible to all, regardless of ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious beliefs.

“The fact that football acts as a leveller in our society is a source of great pride to all of us involved in the game. Whilst everyone is different we're all united by a common passion for a sport that truly belongs to each and every one of us. I'm fully behind UEFA's #EqualGame campaign because I believe in the immense power of the sport and its ability to change our outlook on the world."

**Ada Hegerberg, the Olympique Lyonnais forward**, said:

“Football is popular all over the world and it plays such an important part in people’s lives. This means the game has the power to change attitudes and help communities achieve positive social change.

“I’m backing UEFA’s #EqualGame campaign because I want everyone, and especially young girls, to believe football is for them and they have the right to play and enjoy the game. If we can increase diversity in the game and get more people playing, football and society will be stronger.”

The central principle of #EqualGame is: “Everyone has the right to enjoy football, no matter who you are, where you’re from or how you play”.

As a television, digital and social media campaign involving global football stars, local grassroots players and fans, #EqualGame will generate positive public awareness of all the different ways people can play and enjoy football – including, for example, walking football for older players, grassroots women’s football and football for people with physical impairments. The campaign can be accessed online at [www.equalgame.com](http://www.equalgame.com) and on official UEFA social media platforms.

-ENDS-

Note to editors:

Once the #EqualGame TV advert is broadcast, it will be available to view here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/UEFA>

Images, films (the extended version in all languages) and logos for the #EqualGame campaign can now be accessed here (for editorial purposes):

* <https://library.uefa.com/Go/ts6pjpAF> (images and logos)
* <https://uefa.box.com/v/equalgame> (films)
* [www.equalgame.com](http://www.equalgame.com) (website)

**More information about #EqualGame**:

#EqualGame offers a platform to elite, amateur and grassroots players across the continent to share their personal footballing stories and highlight how the sport has helped them throughout their lives. The new campaign underlines UEFA’s mission to ensure that the game is open and accessible to all, and that there is respect for equality across ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical ability and social differences. As such, #EqualGame will help re-affirm the belief that although people are individuals and play and love football differently, everyone is equal through a shared passion for the sport.

Ultimately, UEFA wants to see football grow and flourish – helping more people across Europe access, play and enjoy the game. UEFA believes #EqualGame stories, images and interactive conversations can provide the inspiration to show people from every walk of life that they have the right to be a part of the football community.

These compelling stories about all the different sorts of people from around Europe who love football and want to show their passion will be accessed via the dedicated campaign website www.equalgame.com, and brought to life through mini-documentary storytelling and engaging fan-generated content. Audiences will be able to view and share the online content via all of UEFA’s digital channels and social media platforms.

The stars of the #EqualGame TV advert are (in order of appearance):

**Eddie Thomas** (age 66):

Eddie hails from Merthyr Tydfil in Wales. After suffering a series of injuries, he was desperate not to give up the game he had been playing since he was 11. Eddie therefore started playing walking football. Eddie, who was a coal merchant by trade, loves the camaraderie of being in a walking football team and the physical activity helps him to keep fit.

**Lionel Messi** (age 30):

Lionel plays for FC Barcelona and Argentina. He is viewed as one of the world’s most iconic footballers over the past decade. He has shown his willingness to promote inclusion and diversity on numerous occasions. Lionel was crowned UEFA player of the year two times.

**Zehra Badem** (age 17):

Zehra lives in Berlin, Germany. She lives and breathes football and is determined to train as much as she can. Zehra has overcome many challenges to pursue her dream to play football and, as a result, has grown in confidence. She is academically bright and receives good grades, while off the pitch, her dream is to become a police officer.

**Cristiano Ronaldo** (age 32):

Cristiano plays for Real Madrid CF and Portugal. He is one of the world’s most recognisable footballers. Cristiano, who helped his country win UEFA EURO 2016, is well-known for his generosity off the pitch and has worked with numerous charities. He has won the UEFA player of the year award three times in his career.

**István Szabó** (age 36):

István is from Budapest, Hungary. Despite being blind, this has not stopped him from embracing football and he is the captain of his local blind football team – Lass Budapest. Football has given him self-confidence and freedom. Away from the pitch, he likes spending time with his wife and young son.

**Paul Pogba** (age 24):

Paul plays for Manchester United FC and France. Paul is well-known for his great personality and off-the-field style. Even more important to him is his commitment to promoting greater equality and diversity in football. Such is his interest in #EqualGame, he even decided to shave the campaign logo into his hair. Paul received the UEFA Europa League player of the year award for his achievements in last season’s competition.

**Ada Hegerberg** (age 22):

Ada, who is from Norway, plays for Olympique Lyonnais. She is one of the most successful and well-known players in the women’s game and she made her professional debut at the age of just 16. Ada is very committed to promoting football inclusion, diversity and accessibility to a wider audience, and is especially keen to help young girls get involved in the game. In 2016, she received the UEFA women’s player of the year award.